

Applicant : Alan Coull  
Serial No. : 09/831,331  
Filed : May 8, 2001  
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Attorney's Docket No.: 11033-064001 / H09867US

REMARKS

Claims 1-5, 7-13, 16, 17, and 19 are presented for examination.

The Examiner maintained the rejection of claims 1-5, 7, 11, 16, 17, and 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,784,171 (Kano). The independent claims are 1 and 16. Claim 1 recites a method of printing that includes providing a printing apparatus having a housing and a print head, and moving the print head relative to the housing. Claim 16 recites a printing station including a printing apparatus having a housing and a printhead capable of being moved relative to the housing to and from a printing position. Kano, however, does not disclose or suggest a method of printing that includes moving a printhead relative to a housing, or a printing apparatus having a printhead capable of being moved relative to a housing.

Instead, as acknowledged by the Examiner, Kano describes a printing system having a printing head 8, which the Examiner identified as being both the claimed printhead and the claimed housing. (See Office Action page 2.) But if the claimed printhead and the claimed housing were one component (namely printhead 8, as suggested by the Examiner), then a method of printing using Kano's printing system cannot include moving a printhead relative to a housing because the printhead and the housing would be one component. Similarly, printing head 8 cannot include a printhead capable of being moved relative to a housing if the printing head were one component. Accordingly, Applicant requests that the rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 6, 8-10, 12, and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,847,743 (Look) in view of Kano. In particular, the Examiner acknowledged that Look does not describe a method of printing information on each article of a set of articles arranged in generally parallel lanes, and relied on Kano for this feature. The sole motivation for modifying Look to print on articles arranged in generally parallel lanes is, according to the Examiner, because Kano apparently teaches that this is advantageous for improving productivity. This motivation, however, is not applicable to the type of printing described by Look.

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Look is not at all concerned with printing on a plurality of articles across lanes, but rather to a typewriter type arrangement utilizing thermal printing technology to print on a single substrate. In particular, Look is focused on printing indicia to a sheeting, such as a retroreflective sheeting that can be applied to roadway signs. The scale at which Look is printing is relatively small.

In comparison, the claimed method of printing and printing station can be used in a factory environment, such as on a production line, where the printing apparatus may be required to traverse a substantial width of the production line and print individual images on each of the articles in the lanes of the production line. The printing apparatus can traverse across a plurality of lanes without having to stop moving the printhead at each registry position, which is what happens with conventional machines, thus avoiding the "stop and start" problems described in Applicant's specification.

The problems encountered in this type of printing are very different with the problems encountered in small scale printing, such as that described by Look. One skilled in the art would not consider Look as being of any contribution to solving the problems addressed by the claimed invention. For example, in Look, the printhead can move side to side to print an image, but this does not provide any solution to the problem of how to print a plurality of discrete images without having to stop the printing apparatus moving between prints. Indeed, applying Look's system to a production line-type process would require wholesale redesign of the method and the system.

Moreover, since Look stresses the ability to accommodate sheetings of different widths, one skilled in the art reading Look and wanting to increase production would do so by increasing the widths of the sheetings, not by printing on a set of articles arranged in generally parallel lane, as claimed.

In light of the above remarks, Applicant requests that the § 103(a) rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Applicant believes the claims are in condition for allowance, which action is requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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